



North Atlantic Marine Mammal Commission

26th Annual Meeting

Press Release - March 8, 2018

Contributing to a sustainable North

Responsible and science-based management of marine mammals enabled by:

- better knowledge on marine mammal populations and their sustainable management,
- sound management advice that has contributed to increases in marine mammal population sizes
- significant improvements in hunting methods
- the establishment of an effective observation scheme for hunting activities in member countries.

NAMMCO Council met in Tromsø 7 -8 March. NAMMCO advises member governments of the Faroe Islands, Greenland, Iceland and Norway, on the conservation status of North Atlantic marine mammals, sustainable takes and responsible hunting methods. NAMMCO is the only international, regional body advising on the management of small and large whales as well as seals and walruses.

NAMMCO provides advice based on science, local knowledge and technological developments. This advice is generated by International Expert Groups and reviewed by NAMMCO's committees. The organisation follows best practices and a precautionary approach. It strives to advice on an ecosystem approach to management.

The meeting discussed the most recent developments in research and management of whales and seals in the North Atlantic. Marine mammals are experiencing various challenges, most notably from climate and other environmental changes. To ensure their continued sustainable management, the full array of interactions within the ecosystem must be taken into account to the extent possible.

Highlights from the meeting:

- **Working Group on By-catch, entanglements and live strandings** which has just started its work, will gather information on the matter from other organisations and develop recommendations for NAMMCO. The focus is animal welfare associated to non-hunting related activities, and how NAMMCO can best contribute to addressing significant adverse impacts of by-catch, entanglement and live strandings on marine mammals.
- **The report of the Global Review of Monodontids** (belugas and narwhals) reviewed the conservation status, threats, and data gaps for all stocks globally. The last review was in 1999. This represents new information including stressors related to climate change on stock identity, movements, abundance, and threats to the populations. This was a ground-breaking comprehensive review including participation from all range states which will inform management of these species.
- **NAMMCO Observation Scheme** for monitoring the compliance of hunting activities to existing regulations will go through a comprehensive review to assess its performance. Recommendations will be presented to the next Council meeting in 2019.
- **EU seal ban and Inuit exemption:** The NAMMCO Council supported the joint initiative taken in Greenland, Nunavut and Northwest Territories in introducing a QR code label system for all products and accessories made of seal skin. The purpose of the label is to document that the purchased seal products are of Inuit origin and are sustainable.
- **NAMMCO Performance review:** an international panel of experts has started their work and will present their report at the next Council meeting in 2019. The aim is to assess how and to what extent the organisation meets the objectives of the Agreement and to provide ways of improvement if necessary.

The next Council meeting will be in the Faroe Islands in 2019.

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Supplementary Information

The agreement to establish NAMMCO was signed in Nuuk on 9 April 1992.

The agenda, list of participants and documents for the Council and Management Committee Meetings can be found at <https://nammco.no/topics/nammco-26/>.

The Governments of Canada, Denmark, Japan and the Russian Federation observed the meeting, as well as Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated and Makivik Corporation (Quebec). Other international organisations represented was the International Whaling Commission, the World Conservation Trust and LIVIN international as well as the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organisation, the North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission, the South East Atlantic Fisheries Organisation.

More information on NAMMCO and its activities can be found at the website nammco.no